

# **Paul Cuffee School**

## **Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**

**May 15, 2008**

**A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Paul Cuffee School was held on May 15, 2008 at the Paul Cuffee Lower School in Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Present: Su Almeida, Luz Alvila, David Burnham, Russell Carey, William Clifton, Sr., Elizabeth Colon, Shivohn Garcia, Philip Gould, Sandy LeClerc, Geanise Love, Keith Mathews, Robin Y. Miles, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Esq., John Patrick, Carolyn Pemberton, Betsy Pollack Shimberg, Babak Taleghani.**

**Excused: Joan Canady Countryman, Stefano Crema, Mary Sylvia Harrison, Barrett Hazeltine, Kay Lisle, Fraser Preston, Ana Cecilia Rosada.**

**Paul Cuffee Staff Present: David Bourns, Jonathan Conklin, Nina Giannotti, Paul Graseck, Julia Karahalidis, Marlon Mussington, Nell Sears, Kathy Tudino.**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. with a welcome by President Joop Nagtegaal and the introduction of Carolyn Pemberton and David Burnham, new and returning, respectively, members of the Board pending approval by the Sailing Institute.**

In his comments opening the meeting Joop spoke about the recent increasing attention being paid to charter schools, both nationally and locally. The main reason for this is that parents are showing an increasing interest in charter schools. Among the trends noted locally and nationally is the fact that the number of student applications to charter schools is growing faster than the number of available openings. Joop reported favorably in signs of progress in Rhode Island, including a recent Board of Regents meeting during which charter school funding was discussed. The current Regents appear favorably disposed toward charter schools, although the current budgetary crisis in the state is having a negative impact on Paul Cuffee School and our peers. Joop also commented on a recent charter school celebration at the State House and the support shown by the presence and remarks of many political leaders.

Joop concluded his welcoming remarks by inviting Shivohn Garcia to address the Board. Shivohn reported that she will be leaving Paul Cuffee School after this year to pursue a doctoral degree at Purdue University. Joop and the Board congratulated Shivohn on this achievement and thanked her for her service to the school as a teacher and as a member of the Board.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of March 20, 2008 were approved unanimously. The

**motion to approve was made by Babak Taleghani and seconded by Martha Newcomb.**

### **Head of School's May Report**

**David Bourns referred the Board to his written report and asked if there were any questions. There was brief discussion of NECAP scores and David noted that Paul Cuffee School met adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets in seven out of eight categories, with progress to be made particularly with regard to students with individual educational plans. The school is doing very well in most categories.**

### **Report on the Lower School Health Curriculum**

**Marlon Mussington and Kathy Tudino provided the Board with an update and discussion of the lower school health curriculum. Kathy reviewed the seven content areas of the health curriculum: personal health; mental and emotional health; injury prevention; nutrition; sexuality and family life; disease prevention and control; and substance use and abuse. Several examples in each area were presented and there were questions and discussion with the Board.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Education Committee**

**David Bourns delivered the report of the Education Committee which included three recommendations for consideration by the Board. The first was with regard to continuation of planning on a schedule to open the high school in 2009 or 2010. David noted that planning for the high school has met all but two milestones: (1) uncertainty exists about funding, primarily due to uncertainty about what the school's authorized class size will be (current authorization is for sixteen students per class and a sustainable financial model calls for twenty per class and it is unclear when and what the Regents will support); and (2) securing an appropriate site and/or building. David reported that the Education Committee had voted to recommend to the Board that Paul Cuffee School move ahead with the planning schedule for the high school with the hope that the Board of Regents will eventually approve the increase in student enrollment. There was discussion among the Board about this recommendation and the associated search for an academic head for the high school. Following discussion it was moved by Shivohn Garcia that:**

**The recommendation of the Education Committee to proceed with planning for the high school be approved with the additional caveat that if a hiring decision needs to be made with regard to an academic head of the high school prior to the June 2008 meeting of the Board that the appropriate consultation take place with the Executive Committee and that the Executive Committee be authorized to take action on the search as necessary on behalf of the Board.**

**Babak Taleghani seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board (Phil Gould recused himself from the discussion and abstained from the vote in this matter).**

**David turned to the matter of the Maritime Curriculum and asked Paul Graseck to briefly present the work of the committee he led on this topic. Following discussion it was moved by Martha Newcomb that:**

**The recommendation of the Education Committee that the draft report prepared and presented by the Maritime Study Group be endorsed and approved as a guiding document for the curriculum for the high school.**

**Liz Colon seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board.**

**The third matter in the report of the Education Committee was “Appointments to Teaching Positions” which was presented to the Board with modest amendments to point number four (the insertion of a final sentence: “The process by which the administration addresses the situation is expected to be in the best interest of our students, giving weight to school morale and seniority as well as teaching qualifications”). Following discussion of the process of review, which included approval by the Human Resources Committee as well, of this recommendation and the substance of the matter, it**

**was moved by Robin Miles that:**

**The recommendation of the Education Committee and the Human Resources Committee that the “Appointments to Teaching Positions” policy statements, as amended in point number four, be endorsed and approved as policy of Paul Cuffee School.**

**Babak Taleghani seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board.**

**At this time it was determined to also discuss and consider item number six on the Board agenda, “Contract Non-renewal/Dismissal Process.” There was discussion among the Board regarding the process by which teachers are evaluated and performance improved and agreement that such processes should be explicated in the Human Resource Manual of the School (if they are not already). Following discussion, it was moved by Judge Clifton that:**

**The “Procedure for Contract Non-Renewal or Dismissal of a Teacher During the Probationary Period” and the “Procedure for Dismissal of a Tenured Teacher” as prepared and presented by the Administration be endorsed and approved as policy of Paul Cuffee School.**

**Phil Gould seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board.**

**With regard to the “Procedure for Contract Non-renewal/Dismal of Staff Not Covered by Teacher-Tenure Statutes,” it was suggested that point number one be amended to read as follows: “The Head of School informs the employee that the employment will be terminated.” and that point number two be amended by inserting “within fifteen days” after the word “chooses.” Following discussion, it was moved by Sandy LeClerc that:**

**The “Procedure for Contract Non-renewal/Dismal of Staff Not Covered by Teacher-Tenure Statutes” as prepared and presented by the Administration and amended as noted above, be endorsed and approved as policy of Paul Cuffee School.**

**Martha Newcomb seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board.**

**Human Resources Committee**

**Martha Newcomb delivered the report of the Human Resources Committee. Following brief discussion, she moved that:**

**The recommendation of the Human Resources Committee that Paul Cuffee School adopt the Domestic Partner Benefit health care coverage as offered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island be endorsed and approved as a policy of Paul Cuffee School.**

**Betsy Pollack Shimberg seconded the motion and it was passed**

**unanimously by the Board.**

## **Finance Committee**

**Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. Following discussion of the recent developments and current status of the discussions with representatives of the owners of the Governor Dyer Farmers' Market, Martha Newcomb moved that:**

**The Finance Committee be authorized by the Board to pursue an option to purchase the Governor Dyer Farmers' Market with a ten year lease term, an option payment of \$700,000 with authorization to increase the option payment up to \$1,000,000 if necessary, and a purchase price at the end of ten years of \$3,500,000 (the purchase price having been previously authorized by the Board in the fall of 2007).**

**Keith Mathews seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board.**

## **Nominating Committee**

**Joop again welcomed Carolyn Pemberton to the Board of Directors, and asked her to introduce herself to the Board. Joop re-welcomed David Burnham to the Board and noted that both appointments are pending anticipated approvals of the Sailing Institute.**

## **New Business**

**No new business was brought before the Board.**

## **Adjournment**

**Martha Newcomb moved to adjourn. Babak Taleghani seconded.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Russell C. Carey, Clerk** \_\_\_\_\_